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AUTHOR Hortin, John A.
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ABSTRACT

In order to investigate the attitudes of Kansas teachers and principals toward rural and small school libraries, a sample of 400 schools with an enrollment of less than 600 was surveyed. Three copies of a 20-item questionnaire were sent to the principal of each identified school; principals completed one copy and selected two teachers to fill out the remaining two copies. A total of 182 schools returned the questionnaires for a response rate of 45.5%. Analysis of the data revealed that there was a significant overall attitude difference between the principal group and the teacher group: the principals generally had a higher positive attitude about the school media library than did the teachers, although both groups were positive. Both groups were less positive about the adequacy of microcomputer technology; the three questions that dealt with microcomputer technology generally had lower mean scores for both principal and teacher groups than did the other items on the questionnaire. One item that both principal and teacher groups agreed on was that teachers did about an average job keeping librarians abreast of trends in curriculum. Demographic data on the diversity of library services, budget, and staffing in the state of Kansas were also collected by the survey. Four data tables and a copy of the questionnaire are provided. (JB)

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Principals' and Teachers' Attitudes Toward Kansas School Media Libraries

by

John A. Hortin

Kansas State University

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The intent of this research was to discover (1) the attitudes of teachers and principals toward rural school libraries, (2) how school principals and teachers compare in their attitudes and (3) what do they expect in the way of services? I made a special effort to ascertain the adequacy of microcomputer technology in Kansas rural schools.

I identified four hundred rural and small schools in Kansas and asked them to participate in this research. The schools identified are involved with the Kansas State University Center for Rural Education and Small Schools. All schools had an enrollment of less than 600 students. Of the four hundred schools in the sample, one hundred and eighty-two schools responded. I used no follow up letter and this may account for the moderate rate of questionnaries returned (45.5%).

The principals of each school received three copies of the twenty item questionnaire (see Appendix I). Each principal completed a copy and selected two teachers to fill out the other two copies. The three copies were returned by the principal. I collected and analyzed demographic data and attitudes toward school media library services and programs. I also analyzed frequencies for the demographic data and used a multivariant analysis of variance to compare principal and teacher groups. The questionnaire consisted of twenty items with the subject ranging from teachers' and students' attitudes about using the library to instructional development services. The higher the score of each item, the more positive the response of the principal or two teachers.

The principal was the contact person in this study and he or she designated the two teachers that were to respond to the questionnaire. This procedure was considered the most expedient and practical, but it should be noted that certain biases and influences affected the data found since the principal did the selecting of the two other respondents. Readers of this study should keep in mind the possible biases inherent in this procedure. A second limitation is that the attitudinal data collected does not necessarily reflect what conditions really exist in rural or small schools, but only attitudes and opinions about these conditions. The demographic data I collected did provide some description and information about budgets, volumes of library books, enrollment, staffing and education of the school media library personnel. A third limitation is the fact that there was only a moderate return of questionnaires (45.5%) from the respondents, and I can only wonder about the reasons. Follow up letters might have given a greater return percentage or phone calls to school districts might have provided more data.

Results and Discussions

I summarized the demographic data for enrollment, number of books and budget in Tables 1, 2, and 3. Over half the schools that responded to the questionnaire have enrollments between 101 and 400 students (57.7%). Only 4.9% or nine schools have over four hundred students. The number of books in the collections vary greatly.

Eleven schools had collections of 2000 or fewer books. Twenty-five percent had 6000 to 8000 books. Eleven other schools had over 10,000 books. My recommendation is a minimum of 15,000 to 20,000 books for most school media libraries to do an adequate job supporting the curriculum. For rural or small schools I recommend some kind of sharing or network system to reach the goal of a collection of 15,000 books. Rural or small school budgets varied, with twenty schools having a budget of under 1000 dollars and one school a 62,500 dollar budget. The largest number of schools (N=29) reported a budget range between 2001 and 3000 dollars.

Eighty-four percent of the schools have a certified librarian. The percentage of time a librarian spent at one site was 66.2%, meaning the librarian spent one-third of his or her time either at another school site serving another faculty or spent that time teaching or with other educational activities.

Another study from the Kansas State Department of Education showed that the number of schools served by one librarian was as follows:

In 11 districts one librarian serves 4 or more sites.
In 36 districts one librarian serves 3 sites.
In 106 districts one librarian serves 2 sites.
In 70 districts two librarians serve 1 site.
(Level, 1984)

Level (1984) said that if librarians are to provide curriculum support and instructional development in each building, the library staffing must be based on the number of teachers in each building and the number of sites served rather than on a per pupil basis, as is the current practice.

Some of the respondents (27.9%) did not know whether their librarian had a master's degree in the specialized field of library media. Twenty-seven percent reported that their school media librarian held a master's degree in that specialized area, while 44.3% reported that the librarian did not hold a master's degree in any field.

There was a significant overall difference between the principal group and the teacher group with the approximate $F=2.28$ ($df=20,434$), $p<.01$. The principals generally had a higher positive attitude about the school media library than did the teachers, although both groups were positive. On two specific items of the twenty item questionnaire there was also a significant difference. The first significant item asked the "library staff's attitude toward teachers" and the teachers' (N=287) mean score was 4.58, while the principals' (N=168) mean score was 4.39 with $F=6.6$ ($df=20,434$), $p<.01$. The teachers felt that the library staff attitude toward teachers was better than the principals did. In the other item to show significance, the question asked about the success of library instruction: the principals (mean = 3.84) felt more positively that the school media librarians were doing a good

job teaching students how to use the library than did the teachers (mean = 3.41 with a significance of F=10.27 (df=20,434), p<.001).

The three items or questions that dealt with microcomputer technology generally had lower mean scores for both principal and teacher groups than did the other items on the questionnaire (see Table 4). The principals were somewhat more positive than the teachers on these three items. One item that both principal and teacher groups agreed on was that teachers did about an average job (mean = 3.33) keeping librarians abreast of trends in curriculum.

Conclusions

This research provided some demographic data on the diversity of library services, budget and staffing in the State of Kansas. There was a significant difference between the principals' attitudes toward the school media center and that of the teachers. As a group, the principals were more positive (approximate F=2.28 {df=20,434}, p<.01). Overall, most principals and teachers in small or rural schools were fairly positive about their school media libraries. Both groups were less positive about the adequacy of microcomputer technology. The demographic data showed that library staffing, budgets and collection size varied widely from school to school. Many librarians were working at one site only 66.2% of the time. In order for librarians to work closely with faculty and students in planning, selecting, producing, using and evaluating instructional materials, I believe librarians need to devote full time to one site. When this practice is impractical, some sort of networking or sharing of staff between districts may be necessary to accomplish better library staffing. Positive attitudes about library and media services are encouraging. However, from responses to the questionnaire, on-site visits and interviews with teachers and librarians I believe there is room for improvement. Local production of media and instructional planning and development are services that many librarians do not have the time to do or the necessary training to accomplish. Principals, teachers and librarians need to be informed about the potential of local production in the schools. Librarians need to know not only how to organize, catalog, and administer the school media collection, but also how to make instructional materials, work with faculty and students on learning experiences, integrate resources and services into the total school program, and share learning and teaching theories, methods and research with teachers and students.

I believe that the school media library should be the fulcrum of intellectual activity and learning for students and the catalyst for innovative learning experiences. A librarian who informs teachers about the many materials and services the library has to offer can achieve these goals and elicit a positive response toward the library. I believe librarians could do more to inform patrons (students, teachers, principals, and parents). Frequently a library needs more staffing and a budget increase to bring about a truly innovative and comprehensive media library that does more than just check out books. I believe librarians should be leaders

in curriculum development, instructional development, local production and computer technology. First, I recommend further research on attitudes about the school media library with an emphasis on student and teacher attitudes. Also, I recommend that librarians work toward informing principals, teachers, parents and students about the leadership role that librarians should play in curriculum development, instructional development and local production. Third, librarians themselves may need to learn through inservice, conferences, retraining seminars and formal coursework about their role in local production, curriculum development and instructional development.

Table 1

Demographic Data on Enrollment
for Rural and Small Schools

Pupil Size	Number of Schools	Cumulative Percent	Percent of Total
1 - 50	32	27.6%	17.6%
51 - 100	36	37.4%	19.8%
101 - 200	59	69.8%	32.4%
201 - 400	46	95.1%	25.3%
401 - 1615	9	100.0%	4.9%
	182		

Table 2

Number of Books in Rural and Small Schools in Kansas

Size of Book Collection	Number of Schools (N=182)	Percentage
800 - 2000	11	6.04%
2001 - 3000	17	9.30%
3001 - 4000	26	14.30%
4001 - 5000	29	15.92%
5001 - 6000	24	13.20%
6001 - 8000	46	25.30%
8001 - 10,000	18	9.90%
Over 10,001	11	6.04%
	182	100%

Table 3

Budget for School Media Libraries of Rural and Small Schools of Kansas*

Budget	Number of Schools	Percentage of Those Schools Who Reported Data
0 - 1000	20	16.20%
1001 - 2000	21	17.07%
2001 - 3000	29	23.50%
3001 - 4000	13	10.50%
4001 - 5000	14	11.38%
5001 - 6000	12	9.76%
6001 - 7000	6	4.87%
7001 - 9500	7	5.69%
62,500	1	.813%
	N=123	

*59 schools did not report this data.

Table 4

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of Principals' (N=168) and Teachers' (N=287) Attitudes About Microcomputers in the School Media Library

Variable	Principals' Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Teachers' Mean Score	Standard Deviation
1. Knowledge of current microcomputer software for subject areas	3.46	1.64	3.40	1.91
2. Library staff encourages teachers to use microcomputer technology	3.60	1.79	3.48	2.02
3. Library staff helps students use microcomputer software	3.59	1.84	3.42	2.04

Appendix I

School District: _____

Name of school: _____

Principal: _____

Teacher: _____

Enrollment: _____

Grades taught: _____

Total number of volumes of library books: _____

Budget: Library media budget (excluding textbooks and equipment) for the current school year: _____ (this attendance center only)

Do you have a certified librarian? _____

What is the percentage of time the librarian is assigned to this building as a librarian? _____

How many volunteers do you use in the library? _____

Does the librarian hold a master's degree in library science? ___

Institution granting degree: _____

Other degrees: _____

PLEASE RATE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS BASED ON YOUR OWN ATTITUDE TOWARD AND EXPERIENCE WITH THE LIBRARY PROGRAM:

	Not Applicable	Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Outstanding
	0	1	2	3	4	5
1. Library hours and schedule						
2. Procedures and policies for distributing materials and equipment						
3. Logistics and facilities for selecting, locating and using print and nonprint materials in the library.						
4. Overall administration of library and media services and programs						
5. Librarian's involvement in curriculum development						
6. Professional atmosphere of the library						
7. Library instruction for students						
8. Students' opinion of library						
9. Teachers' opinion of library						
10. Librarian's knowledge of the technologies of instruction						
11. Use of microcomputers in library management and circulation of materials						
12. Local media production services						
13. Integration of the library program and services with the school program						
14. Librarian's knowledge about current microcomputer software available for subject areas						
15. Instructional development services						
16. Librarian's commitment to professional growth and leadership roles						
17. Librarian's ability to work with students, teachers, administrators and parents						
18. Librarian's ability to locate, obtain, select, evaluate and disseminate instructional materials						
19. Librarian's knowledge of learning/teaching theory, methods and research						
20. Library's ability to provide diverse and innovative learning experiences						

This survey is being conducted under guidelines established by Kansas State University. By cooperating, you will help the survey administrators find answers to important questions; however, your participation in this survey is strictly voluntary. You should omit any questions which you feel invade your privacy or which are otherwise offensive to you. Confidentiality is guaranteed.

* Hortin, J. A. School media specialists and their roles as teachers and curriculum activists. Reading Improvement, in press.

Additional copies of this survey available from the author: Dr. John A. Hortin, College of Education, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas 66506.

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Reference

Level, June. Report to the Kansas Library Media Directors. Salina, Kansas, June 2, 1984.